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Debriefing Students Returning from ESE Survival School

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The preparation for our assignment which was to the 3904th Training Squadron at Camp Carson, Colorado, consisted of three weeks' preparation here at the [REDACTED] headquarters. This preparation included physical conditioning, movies on map reading and map practice, physical conditions outdoors and some practice outdoors on ground navigation. We embarked here at Washington on Monday morning at approximately 0930, flying by commercial airlines to Denver, making stops in St. Louis, Kansas City. We were met at Colorado Springs by Capt. Quick, representing the headquarters group. Our instructions were to either call for transportation or contact [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

However, the Captain came up, introduced himself through satisfactory identification, and we proceeded to the camp with him. We arrived on the same day that we left. On arrival at Camp Carson, we were fed, checked out sleeping bags and assigned to barracks. We were taken care of by 2100 at night. The following day, a Saturday, our gear was issued early in the morning and we were able to get into fatigues, general Army uniform, and some of us were absorbed into the overall pattern without standing forth as civilians. That one pertinent fact, I think, is fortunate to remember. Our stay at Camp Carson was through the following Friday. During this period we began our formal classes on Monday and Monday through Friday we attended lectures, calisthenics in the morning, demonstration exhibits and outdoor demonstrations. We also fired on the range. On Friday we departed for the Saylor Park

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Survival area, ~~The~~ via convoy. Our group remained intact as a ~~group~~ crew of ten, one man designated as aircrew commander, following the same procedure as the aircraft groups which ~~were~~ were assigned to this same training program under the Air Force. At Seylour Park area we made camp on arrival, went through some outdoor demonstrations, deer skinning, had a few lectures, every night we had a campfire discussion of the day's doings. On Saturday we went through a border crossing problem; Sunday was devoted to a mountain climbing problem and instruction and on Monday we began the trip which lasted until the following Saturday. This trek was through a Survival area and included problems in evade and escape; it included problems in border crossing. On the following Saturday we hiked out, picked up the convoy, were returned to Camp Carson; Sunday we were quizzed, turned in our gear and checked out by 1330 on Sunday, and then proceeded from Camp Carson individually or in small groups by commercial airline back to Washington, D. C.

Now that is briefly the outline of the activities covering a two-week period.

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This is [REDACTED] commenting on the 3904th Training Squadron.

At an aircraft matter debriefing the following subjects were covered ~~for~~ and we ~~commented on~~ ^{them}. Among them was the evaluation lectures received out there. We received one series of lectures by a chap named Danya. He covered quite extensively Russian security forces and border crossings in general. The preparation which we got here was more comprehensive and made his lectures more understandable. The lectures there contained highly classified material ^{and} and were extremely valuable ~~for~~ the men thoroughly appreciated all the information they got there. However, it was not as comprehensive in many respects as the information which we received here at [REDACTED]. We were given a check on code. However, the training here I thought was inadequate for even

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of code that we were required to use on the trek. The preparation here was a three-week course and while the men could send, they could not receive ^{with} the speed or with the precision that would be required in actual Survival conditions. I think that in future operations more emphasis should be put on code. We spent some time on the firing range and the performance there was what might be expected from a diverse group such as this. Some of the men performed excellently because of previous training, and others made a low average below requirements. As the necessity of range firing technique becomes more pronounced I believe the training should be emphasized on that point. On the backtracking and treks I think that out there more emphasis should be put in teaching a man how to actually package his pack for more comfort. I think personal hygiene should be stressed more closely. For example, specific techniques should be pointed out to the men for drying out shoe pads, _____ the inner soles ^{from} ~~for~~ their shoes and drying them separately. In sending future groups out from [REDACTED] I would recommend that the men take their own boots and wear them here prior to going out. Our big problem was blisters and I think scarcely a man in our group of ten escaped foot trouble of one kind or another. The boots that were issued there were combat boots and shoe packs. The majority of our men wore the shoe packs because they were expecting snow and damp weather. They did not have half sizes, therefore, the boots were a poor fit to start with. I also recommend that the men take along extra wool socks and the moccasock type, that is, the wool sock with a sort of leather bottom which is light in weight and is excellent for use when you're out of the immediate camp area - gives your feet a breather, gives you a chance to get out of the heavy boots for the day's trek and it would be very comfortable. The other equipment problem I think on the trek was the lack of wind-proof or water resistant clothing. In actual snow conditions we would have been

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pretty miserable. We were issued a fatigue type uniform and parkas. There was adequate warmth as long as we were long winter underwear underneath, but they were not wind resistant and they were not water resistant. While they have extra equipment that men could take along on this, I wholeheartedly recommend each individual taking a couple packages of bouillon to make soup. It really does a job out there. The equipment in the first aid kits was inadequate in my estimation and there was not adhesive enough for an entire air crew of any size, there were not enough bandaids. We went through those in a big hurry. There was no ointment of any kind for cuts or scratches. We finally used a boric acid eye ointment in one case. I think that about covers some of the equipment deficiencies. We were issued an Argus monocular which did not perform according to specifications in my estimation. It was a 6 _____ monocular and poorly constructed with not 6 _____ actually. I think it would tend to fall apart after any rough usage. The chow was more than adequate. However, pretty heavy and something ~~like this~~ might be done by way of giving lighter rations, I don't know. We had a session on parachute training which was comprehensively conducted and was excellently given - lectures, demonstrations. The training at Seylour Park, I believe, should be extended because there was too much time spent at Camp Carson and I believe the time was not utilized to the fullest extent. I believe there should be projects for crews. I think that there should be actual practice in evade and actually crawling through brush, not merely getting a group out and watching some other man doing it. There could be further training on the use of traps and snares, how to make them, how to set them. We saw an exhibit and while on the trek we made the traps and snares, however, the time was not sufficient to really do a ^{thorough} job. I think there ought to be more by way of lecture and demonstration on the edible vegetation in various areas.

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That was pretty well overlooked. I'd also like to see them give some demonstration of the interrogation methods. For example, on equipment. On the border crossing at Seylour Park, a number of men were captured and taken in and given an interrogation. I think that in addition to the lectures that we were given, if we had actually seen some demonstration, of the interrogation procedures, dos and don'ts, their performance might have been better. Particularly for civilian groups I would like to emphasize the point of military courtesy in interrogation by _____.

That is one point that I fell down on. I've been a civilian too long to remember that I was supposed to salute. Consequently, I did not. It's a little point, but it might crop up some time. The briefing at Seylour Park by Col. Crawford was inadequate. He did not have his guards who were acting as Russian guards on a border briefed. It was a pretty Snafu situation. The Survival area outside of Selour Park, I believe, is inadequate. We did not see any game with the exception of one or two rabbits we saw many trails, but they were old ~~trails~~ trails. We had a good deal of civilian contact. We had to use roads and evade through ranches, etc. On the evasion of the Army territory during our trek we were able to utilize very well the lectures that we got on trail discipline, scouting and were able to utilize the ~~basic~~ basic procedures. On air evacuation and selecting of suitable landing grounds, our crew did an especially fine job according to their evaluation. The big problem in selection of landing site was the problem of congestion. There were too many crews and too small an area from which to make a selection. However, the demonstrations and lectures on landing sites were very comprehensive and more than adequate. In all, our big problem on the trek was the problem of blister and no other great personal discomforts.

There is one other phase I would like to comment about and that was the

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the security phase. The security at Camp Carson is foul. It is the poorest security set-up that I have ever seen. There is not a chance of any group from [REDACTED] going out there on a deep security unless they go as an air crew and can be fully packed up as an air crew and thoroughly briefed on type of aircraft, etc. At the Camp Carson security is bad because there is no fenced off area to insure security. Classes ^{of} ~~have~~ all types, the most pertinent classes, could be easily penetrated. In fact, I encountered 3 men who were from supply from the cook shop who had no business in the lectures and they were listening to one of [REDACTED] lectures on Russian borders. There doesn't seem to be much security consciousness inspired by security lectures. The intelligence officer at Camp Carson is perhaps one of the worst offenders and he is charge at Saylor Park of the border crossing situation. Col. Crawford was responsible for (1) pumping our crew as to their identity. He then entered a bet with our instructor that our instructor could not find out where we were actually ~~from~~ from and the instructor did not and he also pumped one of our men who was evacuated. There was a radio lecture given in the Saylor Park area and we were assigned a special agent type radio, the URG-5. In the lecture because we were a civilian crew, it was known among many of the men that we were civilians, the big comment was "where are they getting a light radio when all of us are lugging a big one?" and in the lecture the sergeant making the demonstrations said "This type radio is for fighter pilots and agents, enemy agents as well as our own. This radio is for crew 1, immediately typing us in with that category. It was not intentional, but it was a bad slip. We had another radio man, [REDACTED] at the end of the trek asking me about [REDACTED] still with your organization?"

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"It's alright I know who you are." Wall, [REDACTED] had worked with the 25X1A9a
organization in the past, in fact, had been here in Washington. However, it
was a ^{security} ~~break~~/break on his part and should not be permitted to continue.

Question inaudible.

Wall, I don't know what he thought we were with, but he decided we were
with an intelligence outfit and he decided he knew who we were with. Those
were our only security problems. One other security problem I might mention
the fact that ten of us went out on the same plane. Our tickets were issued
in a block. The people at TWA knew there were ten people headed for the
same plane. The tickets issued one right after another and naturally assumed
the connection. We were seated singly or in twos spread out over the plane,
however, the stewardess evidently had the word that there were 10 for
Colorado Springs and all she did was look up and down the aisle men of
approximately the same ages and immediately started asking questions. The
stewardess finally decided that we were going skiing at Colorado and called
us the ski club or something like that. It went off alright, but coming back
I don't believe they were any security problems. Some of the crews at Carson
asked us questions and our [REDACTED] story seemed to satisfy them. However, with
the people who were more observant or persistent, I don't think the story
would hold up too well, because we weren't actually living a [REDACTED] cover, we 25X1C4a
weren't taking notes, or weren't doing any of the things that [REDACTED] People 25X1C4a
normally would in living the cover. I think that concludes the overall
comments that I have.

We were given a map reading course here at [REDACTED]. We saw the same films 25X1C4a
again at Camp Carson that we saw more films here than at Carson on the
subject. I think all our men with one or two exceptions were thoroughly
briefed on ground navigation and in a couple test positions, we took bearing,

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determined our position in the evasion area and 8 out of 10 men ^{know} ~~XXX~~ their position right ^{on} ~~XXX~~ the hicky. We didn't seem to have too much trouble with navigation at all. Training here was a definite _____.

Q. How about your physical condition?

A. Our physical condition was more than comparable to that of the other crews out there. I would like to suggest that physical conditioning here more heavily emphasize legs, however. We did a lot of up and down hill

5X1C4a work on our [REDACTED] HEADQUARTERS in the woods and that proved valuable. Our

overall physical conditions was good. Do you have any further questions?

25X1A9a My name is [REDACTED]. I agree with everything [REDACTED] has [REDACTED] said. 25X1A9a

said. I would further like to add that the trek itself out in the Seylour Park area is nothing but a ^{form} ~~trial~~ of endurance, more or less, rather than actual survival. In a group you are told what to do, and sometimes not to do certain things by the leader and in conjunction with this type of work where many times an individual will be on his own, he ^{himself} will be his own leader.

~~It is a matter of~~ In contrast to that trek it is not a matter of group discipline or military discipline, it is a matter of self-discipline.

And that very fact is the keynote of our whole school

was not expressed ~~and~~ strongly enough at Camp Carson in the lectures.

It ^{was done} ~~should be~~ more on the basis "I'm here, in this group; I have to do it, so I'll make the best of it." Another thing I would strongly add in relation to better training in that school would be to continue the five-day trek and to learn all you could about camping and woodcraft. You have, say, two or three more days where convoys would take individuals or the group and disperse them throughout the area at certain points and let each individual

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^{then}
 make his own trek so that each individual would know how to navigate and
 and to find, etc. The second point is the rations. For five days we had a
 lot of complaints about the rations. The facts are that as a school ^{it} ~~we~~ should
 come pretty close to reality. When the ship goes down or a man is on his own
 all he has is his survival kit, if he's lucky. And in that survival kit he
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We were brought into a room and everyone sat down and we were given a test to see if we could each pass a five minute exam. Each group was then given operative equipment to send and receive twenty words a minute.

25X1A9a This is [REDACTED]. I'm going to give a little talk on the training we had here prior to our visit to Camp Carson. We had training here that could be outlined as follows. We had PT training, E & E training, border films and maps and also lectures on maps, we had route finding and navigation lectures, we had quite a few lectures and movies on security and we had some training of communications and codes. The PT training consists of two parts; one was the indoor muscle-building type and the other was the outdoor running to develop our wind and a trek through the woods. The trek through the woods was more to give us an idea of how time passes in the woods, how far we can go in a given length of time, and how landmarks appear on the map as seen from a person hidden in the woods. The E & E, we had films on concealment and evasion and one time, just before we left for Camp Carson, we had a problem which was land navigation around the present area here and part of the problem was to return to the building without being seen by other groups that were navigating their way through the woods. As far as the movies and lectures on the border, as [REDACTED] said, we had a very comprehensive training here which stood us very good when we listened to [REDACTED] (?) we could more appreciate and understand what he was talking about much better. On map training, we had the military grid system in a latitude and longitude system of locating an object, on navigation, merely the going from one point to another point and by maps spotted ourselves at one point by use of the coordinates then went to another point and spotted ourselves there. That did us some good. The security was emphasized quite well, I think. The men here are very much more security conscious than any other group. I disagree with [REDACTED] as far as cipher goes. I think we got adequate training in cipher before we left.

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Carson. In communications, it's true that many of us got about 5 to 8 words a minute as far as receiving and that was all that was required of us, but then probably many of us dropped back to less than that by the time we got out there. Here, we weren't given any extensive navigation course, but I think for the time that we developed, many of us got an appreciation of the coordinate system. In general, my impression was that practically everything we got here at school we used to some advantage and I felt fully confident when I went out to Camp Carson, that I was able to do anything either as a result of previous experience or as a result of the knowledge I gained here at Happy Valley.

On the line navigation, we worked on that by finding longitude and under some conditions you'd have to know how to do that. It's a very simple thing, it would only take about ten minutes to learn how to do.

You mean latitude and longitude without the use of navigation instruments.

Yes.

I know I for one received much more completely minute details which I didn't get here. We just got a general picture here of land mines and tank treads and border markings.

I think that Mr. Wiggins, our civilian instructor, could be complimented because he's very sharp and he gave us much information that helped us a great deal in the woods. His experience has been very extensive, as I understand, he's been a meteorologist, weather bureau observer in Alaska and Greenland, he's even set up posts in various places. He was with us from the time we officially started duties at Camp Carson until we wound up. He worked with just our group. He had about 15 years experience in trailing in sub-arctic countries, he's been all over Greenland, all over most of Canada, and most of Alaska, and he really knows his stuff.

He also handsit out in a very complimentary way. I wouldn't be at all surprised if his education seems to be very satisfactory. I was surprised very much when we

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were doing mountain climbing, he started to describe to me positions of
in victorial forces.

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This is [REDACTED] speaking and I'll try to give a little summary of various phases of training that we received before we went on our trek at Camp Carson. [REDACTED] would use on our trek ~~and on our trek~~. The first day, we received the equipment that we ~~received before we went on our trek~~ in the morning, which consisted of fatigue clothes and a parka, and a compass, knife, and axes and shovels were distributed, to the AC of the group for the use by the group in general. Then, from the period covering from Monday to Friday, when we left the park, we received lectures in the construction of air strips and evacuations. We also had demonstrations by a souped-up C-47, I guess it was, and a SA-16, which could land and take off in an area of about, I think, within 300 feet. This was in case you had to construct something in a very congested area and could get a plane into that flying at a low level. This C-47 and SA-16 could do it. They also had a super DC-3 that we saw in a movie, that could do it in less than 300 feet, with the assistance of We also went out to the range and fired the 22 hornet rifle which is the weapon that is included in the survival kit for shot-down fliers. This rifle has a very great penetrating power for its weight and its size and each man is equipped with 150 rounds in this survival kit. We fired that for a record out there and we never did see the results of it, but I imagine we did comparable to the other groups. A few of the bars in the camp were used for display purposes, to show us what typical camp sites would look like in order to live as closely as possible under survival conditions and these were demonstrations of such things as tepees, lean-to's, traps and snares for catching game, and we had charts on the walls to show you how to recognize a few tracks of different animals. Then we had movies on ground navigation which were just the same movies that we had received here at [REDACTED]. I don't know whether that was good

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that they were pretty elementary. And then one particular day we went from the immediate barracks area, out into the field and watched the demonstration formations of ~~handicapped~~ moving in a fairly open country, in enemy territory, the formations that you would use in evasive tactics. ~~Then~~ one demonstrated was the diamond formation which is used by the information and although we, ourselves, in the evasive area that we used on the trek, used an arrowhead pattern because it seemed to be more advantageous because it was so closely wooded that we were afraid that we might possibly lose the net. They also showed us a demonstration of a theft of food from a farm house. There was no actual farm house but there was a cage where they had some chickens there, and the sergeant did a very job of stealing the chickens by means of a snare that he constructed himself, he did it very quietly, the way it would be done under survival conditions. We also were shown the survival kit which all these different types of aircraft are equipped with and although we didn't actually use it, it seemed to me that most of the equipment in the kits was in the process of being made. Most of them were either obsolete or being made over again and it seemed as though the school itself, in that particular phase of it, was just at a beginning, they were changing it all the time, and were open for suggestions all the time. We received our security lectures from a Major Crawford who ~~was~~ told us that we could, say, I suppose that would be all right for the Air Force anyway, to say that they were attending a survival school there for purposes of becoming ~~with~~ acquainted with the means of surviving in case of being shot down and he emphasized the fact that no reference would be made to the E & E part of training which was one of the major parts of it, in other words, the personnel in the Air Force out there could say they were going to a survival school but without mentioning E & E or border crossing, or anything like that. And then we had some movies on survival. One, in a very cold area, and the fighter pilot was shot down, developed motor

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trouble and had to crash land and it was a very good movie, and he used everything about him to exist until finally they could get somebody out to him and drop in supplies. They also showed another survival movie on survival conditions in the tundra regions, I guess ~~in~~ it was the springtime period because the snow wasn't melted but there was a under it and it was very tough walking and very wet, sloppy, going and this was also an excellent movie in technicolor. It was these two, I think, were the only two movies we didn't see when we got to survival conditions, before we went out there. I think that's about all the phases of training at Carson.

25X1A9a My name is [REDACTED] As for my comments on the school, generally, I thought the thing was excellent but there are a couple points that seem to have been missed. First of all, physical training out there was sufficient for anybody who would want to climb over those damned mountains. There is the obvious difficulty which is the survival area has no game in it, so you can't live off the land which is one of the primary reasons for having the school, so it seems to defeat its purpose, somewhat. There is no game to speak of, we couldn't even get any fish out of the rivers, although in some conditions that seems ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~change~~ changed. There's not enough time spent on the actual physical need for survival. You never found out how far you could go without eating, how far you could walk, you could form no standard for yourself, as to what kind of abilities you had for it. The time, of course, was limited, although it seemed to me that a great many of the lectures and demonstrations was just a rah-rah procedure for the Air Force, so that their ~~many~~ boys could see how wonderful the airplanes were coming in and going out. Mr. [REDACTED] was at Camp Carson and was given much too little time. His material could be probably gotten very few other places and it seemed to me that the trip itself would be worth it just to get to hear [REDACTED]. The equipment, generally, so far as I was concerned, was not sufficient, and has been brought out, was not

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fitted for a winter time survival. The radio conditions were not actual. On the border crossing itself, the system was set up in what I thought was a very childish manner. Rules were made and broken. The game was played according to certain rules and then again it wasn't played according to rules and you could cross the border if you were arrogant about it, you could walk across in certain parts, although as training, I suppose it was excellent there. It seems to me though, that there could be enough left done to make the whole school itself, a great deal tougher on you. We treated all the way through not only with a great deal of courtesy, but as if we were rather small children, learning how to walk. I have a few comments to make on the ~~whole~~ program as a whole. I think as it pertains to our group and succeeding groups. We tended to stress, I think, more the E & E part of the training than the plain survival and I think probably from my point of view, ~~was~~ that is more important. Along that line, I think the training was inadequate. We could probably do a lot better if we set up our own school or just got two or three instructors to point out the same facts and illustrate the same methods we got out there. The chief thing at Camp Carson was the problem of time, I believe, they had to get all those men trained and the main interest will be of course on survival rather than on E & E, so that when you don't have enough time to go on your own and live off the land, it's rather difficult to learn very much, also the navigation and route finding were inadequate because there were too many landmarks. Everybody knew exactly where he was going to go for that night and you'd just come to a road and you'd know where you were and if you could find a rather remote area that had very few landmarks and where you'd have to follow a compass course instead of just looking at the sun or looking at your watch, you might get more benefit but with the limited amount of time, you can't really do that.

As you say, they do have a very limited time there, I believe that you are trying

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to get across the point that they were just giving us the principles that ~~we~~ ~~would~~ laid down, but we ourselves would fill in the details, because not two survival conditions will be the same and then by merely giving us the principals which we can follow then it will be up to ourselves to fill in the detail should we find ourselves in that condition.

The questions was asked as to how our group stacked up with the others. As far as scores are concerned, I don't know, that information will be forwarded as soon as all the tabulations are in. Colonel Peers, reports to me that our instructor graded our group as much better than average of any group that he himself had ever taken through, and he's taken through some nine or ten classes, and in relation to the other groups out there at the same time, our group in an overall score was evidently pretty close to the top. We had by far the best morale, we responded better to the training and the suggestions which were offered us, probably because we were more cognizant of the immediate effect upon us as individuals. The instructor was very satisfied with the group as a whole.

Was there any difficulty anywhere along the line due to the fact that you were civilians and that everybody knew it?

No there was not. The only time that particular fact was brought out was at times at ~~XXXXXX~~ Camp Carson, the first evenings we were there, we appeared in civilian clothes and after that we got into fatigues as quickly as possible became a part of the picture, but we appeared as civilians and some of the camp personnel knew us as civilians and the word got around. Occasionally, we were asked why we were there and our cover story was sufficient so far as any of the other crews were concerned. At other times the questions would come up as to what we were flying and we'd say we were flying nothing, we were just XXXXXX in that would

Washington and ~~xxxx~~ just simply handle the situation. The personnel on the base were curious, that is, home personnel, instructors, people in the chow halls and various supply personnel, but we didn't ~~xxxx~~ have any great trouble with any

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of them.

Did you have an opportunity to talk with any of the airmen that were in your class, about what they thought of the school?

Personally, I did, I made it a point at every meal of not sitting with any members of our particular group or even when I was ~~asked~~ to ask questions, ~~because~~ I was able to ask questions freely and get some pretty good answers. The consensus of opinion which I got was that the men thought the school was fine but there was too much work and they thought there was an easier way to do it, that on the week all the hills went up and none went down and there was quite a bit of dissension even among crews who'd been together a long time. There were numerous cases of officers in charge of groups evading responsibility or sloughing off in general. There were one or two very flagrant cases which were rather disgusting until they were brought to their attention and then they were appropriately handled, I'm sure. In general, the crews thought that the training was valuable but when they first came in they seemed to resent it, the more they got the more they appreciated it but they still resented the effort. Typically Army, a lot of bitching and griping, but I think after the experience was over they thought it was all worthwhile.

Getting in Friday night and getting here just as early as possible was a great help because as soon as we got into our fatigues we were just lost in an army of men and it helped a great deal.

End of Debriefing

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